

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend the claims as shown in the Listing of Claims below. This Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) ~~A mechanism for coupling first and second structures together, said mechanism~~ driving device comprising:

a first member coupled to ~~[[said]]~~ a first structure;

a second member coupled to ~~[[said]]~~ a second structure, the second member including a piezoelectric device; [[and]]

a contactor exerting a contact force to bring said first member into contact with said second member;

~~wherein said second member is capable of generating a levitation force opposing said contact force and acting upon said first member~~

a driving source coupled to at least one of the first member via the first structure and the second member via the second structure, wherein the driving source drives at least one of the first structure and the second structure;

an electrical signal source supplying an electrical signal to the piezoelectric device; and

a control circuit coupled to the electrical signal source and controlling the electrical signal supplied to the piezoelectric device so as to generate a levitation force,

wherein the control circuit controls the electrical signal so that a frictional force generated between the first member and the second member continuously changes by the levitation force.

2. (Currently Amended) A ~~[[mechanism]]~~ driving device according to claim 1, wherein the contactor includes a resilient member exerting a biasing force.

3. (Currently Amended) A ~~[[mechanism]]~~ driving device according to claim 2, wherein the resilient member exerts the biasing force on the first member to bring the first member into contact with the second member.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) A ~~[[mechanism]]~~ driving device according to claim ~~[[5]]~~ 1, wherein the ~~[[vibrator]]~~ the second member includes a vibrating body ~~and a coupled to the~~ piezoelectric device ~~coupled to said vibrating body~~, and wherein said vibrating body exciting ~~[[the]]~~ an out-of-plane vibration in ~~[[the]]~~ a surface of the second member when ~~AC power~~ the electrical signal is supplied to the piezoelectric device.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) A ~~[[mechanism]]~~ driving device according to Claim ~~[[5]]~~ 6, wherein the out-of-plane vibration is a stationary wave.

9. (Currently Amended) A ~~[[mechanism]]~~ driving device according to Claim 1, wherein the first and second members have contact and non-contact states, wherein in said contact state the contact force is greater than the levitation force to bring said first member into contact with said second member, and wherein in said non-contact state said levitation force is greater than said contact force to move said first member out of contact with said second member.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Canceled)

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) A method of controlling mechanical coupling of first and second structures into contact, said method comprising the following steps:

coupling the first structure to a first member having a surface;

coupling the second structure to a second member including a piezoelectric device;

pressing said first and second members together at said surface with a contact force such that a frictional force is generated between said first and second members; ~~[[and]]~~

supplying an electrical signal to the piezoelectric device; and

controlling the electrical signal supplied to the piezoelectric device so as to generate a levitation force and so that the frictional force generated between the first and second members continuously changes by the levitation force.

~~generating a levitation force at said surface opposing said contact force so as to change said frictional force.~~

14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim ~~[[14]]~~ 13, ~~wherein the step of exciting the out-of-plane vibration includes the steps of~~ further comprising:

providing the ~~[[first]]~~ second member having a vibrating body ~~and an electro-mechanical energy transducer coupled thereto; and~~ coupled to the piezoelectric device,

wherein the step of controlling supply of an AC the electrical signal supplied to said electro-mechanical energy transducer the piezoelectric device in order control the includes controlling a magnitude of [[the]] an out-of-plane vibration in the vibrating body, and therefore the magnitude of the levitation force.

16. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 15, wherein the step of controlling ~~supply of~~ the ~~[[AC]]~~ electrical signal includes controlling the magnitude of the levitation force to be less than the contact force so that the first and second member are in a contact state and controlling the magnitude of the levitation force to be greater than the contact force so that the first and second members are in a non-contact state.

17. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 16, wherein the step of controlling ~~supply of~~ the ~~[[AC]]~~ electrical signal includes controlling the magnitude of the levitation force relative to the contact force in order to control the frictional force between the first and second members.

18. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim ~~[[14]]~~ 13, wherein the step of pressing the first and second members together includes biasing the first and second members together with a resilient member.

19. (Canceled)